

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for a bridge server in a multimedia conference to select one video stream from video streams of multiple participants of the multimedia conference for forwarding to a client, the steps comprising:

defining a participant selection control parameter for the multimedia conference, said participant selection control parameter being used to tune the video switching stream behavior for the multimedia conference;

receiving simultaneously multimedia conferencing data from the multiple participants, the multimedia conference data including a video stream from each of the participants;

monitoring participant events of the multimedia conference, said participant events associated with the multimedia conferencing data of the participants, said participant events being generated in response to changes in the data information and the control information of the multimedia conferencing data;

providing a participant state table associated with the multimedia conference indicating an activity state variable for each participant of the multimedia conference, said activity state variable including values and statistics associated with the participant's multimedia conference data;

updating the activity state variable in the participant state table for each of the participants according to the participant events;

periodically computing a weight for each of the participants based on the activity state variable of said each participant and the participant selection control parameter;

identifying a participant having a highest weight among the participants; and
selecting from the received multimedia conferencing data a video stream corresponding to the identified participant having the highest weight for viewing by the client.

Claim 2. (original) A computer-readable medium as in claim 1, wherein the multiple participants are connected to the bridge server through a multicast network.

Claim 3. (original) A computer-readable medium as in claim 2, having further computer-executable instructions for performing the step of transmitting to the client an audio stream containing a mixture of audio signals from the multiple participants of the network conference.

Claim 4. (original) A computer-readable medium as in claim 1, wherein the step of computing the weight includes determining whether said each participant is currently being shown to the client.

Claim 5. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium as in claim 4, wherein the step of computing the weight includes one or more of the following: determining a length of time for which said each participant has been shown to the client if said each participant is currently being shown and determining whether said each participant is talking.

Claim 6. (canceled)

Claim 7. (original) A computer-readable medium as in claim 1, wherein the step of computing the weight includes determining a length of time for which said each participant has not been shown to the client.

Claim 8. (canceled)

Claim 9. (original) A computer-readable medium as in claim 1, wherein the multimedia conference streams include a combined video stream containing multiple substreams each corresponding to one of the multiple participants, and wherein the step of receiving includes demultiplexing the combined video stream into a plurality of individual video streams each including one of the substreams in the combined video stream.

Claim 10. (currently amended) A system for conducting a multimedia network, comprising:

a plurality of participants each providing multimedia conferencing data including video signals and audio signals;

a client in conference with the participants, the client capable of receiving a video stream corresponding to one of the participants at a time;

a participant selection control parameter stored in a memory for tuning the video switching stream behavior;

a participant state table stored in a memory and indicating an activity state variable for each participant, said activity state variable including values and statistics associated with the participant's video signals and audio signals, said activity state variable being updated according to changes in the data information and the control information of the video signals and audio signals; and

a bridge server connected to the participants through a network and having a point-to-point connection with the client, the bridge server receiving simultaneously the multimedia conferencing data including a video stream from each of the participants, updating the activity state variable stored in the memory for each participant in the participant state table, periodically computing a weight of said each participant based on the activity state variable of said each participant and the participant selection control parameter, identifying a participant having a highest weight among the participants, and selecting from the received multimedia conferencing data a video stream corresponding to the identified participant having the highest weight for transmission to the client for viewing.

Claim 11. (original) A system as in claim 10, wherein the plurality of participants and the bridge server are connected through a multicast network.

Claim 12. (original) A system as in claim 10, wherein the bridge server further transmits to the client an audio stream containing a mixture of audio signals from the participants of the network conference.

Claim 13. (original) A system as in claim 10, wherein the computing of weight by the bridge server includes determining whether said each participant is currently being shown to the client.

Claim 14. (original) A system as in claim 13, wherein the computing of weight by the bridge server includes determining a length of time for which said each participant has been shown to the client if said each participant is currently being shown.

Claim 15. (original) A system as in claim 13, wherein the computing of weight by the bridge server includes determining whether said each participant is talking.

Claim 16. (original) A system as in claim 10, wherein the computing of weight by the bridge server includes determining a length of time for which said each participant has not been shown to the client.

Claim 17. (canceled)

Claim 18. (original) A system as in claim 10, wherein the multimedia conferencing data received by the bridge server include a combined video stream having substreams corresponding to the participants, and wherein the bridge server demultiplexes the combined video stream into a plurality of individual video streams each including one of the substreams in the combined video stream.

Claim 19. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium as in claim 1, wherein the activity state variables include at least one of the following variables: time since the participant was last shown, time for which ~~this~~the participant's video has been showing to the client, time since ~~this~~the participant started talking, an indicator that the participant is currently talking, an indicator that the participant is currently sending video, and an indicator that the participant's video is currently being sent to the other participants.

Claim 20. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium as in claim 1, ~~wherein the participant state table includes at least one of the following variables: participant identifier, participant name, activity state variables, and weight; and wherein the participant event[[s]] is generated in response to at least one of the following~~include at least one of the following events: a participant started-starts sending video, a participant stopped-stops sending video, a participant joined-joins the multimedia conference, a participant started-starts sending audio, a participant stopped-stops sending audio, and a participant left-leaves the multimedia conference.

Claim 21. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a data structure, comprising:

a participant field representing a participant providing a video stream to a conference;

a participant selection control parameter representing the video stream switching behavior of the conference ;

an activity state field representing the status of the participant within the conference wherein the activity state field is updated when a participant event occurs, said activity state field including statistics associated with the participant's video stream and audio stream, said activity state field being updated according to changes in the data information and the control information of the participant's video stream and audio stream; and

a data field representing a weight of the participant wherein the data field is periodically computed from the activity state field of the participant and a participant selection control parameter, the weight determining the selection of the video stream of the participant for transmission as part of the conference.

Claim 22. (previously presented) The computer readable medium as in claim 21, wherein the participant field includes information relating to at least one of the following:

a participant identifier and a participant name; and
wherein the activity state field includes information relating to at least one of the following:

a time since the video stream of the participant was last transmitted as part of the conference, a time for which the video stream of the participant has been transmitted to other participants, a time since the participant started talking, an indicator that the participant is currently talking, an indicator that the participant is currently transmitting video, and an indicator that the video stream of the participant is currently being transmitted to other participants.

Claim 23. (new) The computer readable medium as in claim 1, wherein the participant selection control parameter includes information relating to at least one of the following: Minimum time that a selected participant's video stream will be displayed on the client screen, minimum time that a selected participant's video stream will be displayed on the client screen if the participant is still talking for this period of time, time period for which the Stream Selection thread will go to sleep before it wakes up again to compute weights and switch video, the time period that an actively talking participant's video stream is displayed by the client if only this participant is talking, the time period that each participant's video stream is displayed if none of the participants is talking, control that helps enforce the time period that an actively talking participant's video stream is displayed by the client if only this participant is talking for participants, control that helps enforce the time period that each participant's video stream is displayed if none of the participants is talking for participants, the maximum time that can elapse before a participant who is not at all talking (sending audio) is selected.